

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# News Release

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*Washington, D.C.* -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that, in fiscal year 1999, it will enroll all veterans who apply for VA health care.

The new enrollment program, part of the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act, requires that veterans be enrolled as of Oct. 1, 1998, to receive health care at VA medical facilities nationwide. While the program gets underway Oct. 1, there is no deadline for applying for enrollment.

"It is our desire to serve as many veterans as possible under this new law, and we've made it easier than ever before for veterans to obtain health care benefits," said Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer, VA Under Secretary for Health. "For the first time, enrolled veterans will have access to the full range of services they need, not just those medical needs resulting from military service."

Under the Act's reforms, VA offers an expanded array of health care services, such as preventive care and outpatient services, in addition to eliminating many prior restrictions and confusion. Veterans can apply for enrollment in the program using a quick and easy application form that is available at any VA medical or benefits facility.

All veterans, except those who fall into certain categories, need to apply for enrollment to receive VA health care benefits. Those who are not required to be enrolled include:

- veterans with a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more;
- veterans seeking care for a service-connected disability; and
- veterans discharged from military service for less than one year for a disability that was determined to have been incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but that VA has not yet rated.

While not required to apply for enrollment, these exempted veterans are still encouraged to apply so VA can plan more effectively to meet veterans' health care needs. Veterans who have received VA health care since January 1, 1996, will have an application for enrollment automatically processed on their behalf.